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ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF 12.3 ACRES OF THE HIGH POINTE APARTMENTS HUD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS

by
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C Dimensions Short Report of Investigations 2016-H-01

for
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ABSTRACT

C Dimensions was contracted by Dougherty Mortgage, LLC to conduct an intensive archeological survey of a proposed property development with a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) component. Background research and archival investigations for the vicinity did not indicate the presence of previously recorded sites in or adjacent to the project area.

An intensive archeological survey including extensive surface examination and seven subsurface shovel tests resulted in no discoveries of historic cultural or archeological sites, materials, or deposits.

Structures adjacent to the project area are all modern school and baseball field structures and do not merit consideration as historic properties. No materials that require curation were encountered or collected. Large parts of the subject property have been disturbed by drainage channelization and gas line installation. In addition, due to the eroded nature of most sediments encountered, as well as frequently flooded slackwater clay deposits or frequently flooded areas characterized standing ponded water, the probability for the presence of buried sites is extremely low. No additional cultural resources investigations are recommended.

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

Introduction

C Dimensions was contracted by Dougherty Mortgage, LLC in May, 2016, to conduct an intensive archeological survey of the proposed High Pointe Apartments project consisting of 12.3 acres of undeveloped private property that will be developed under a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiative (Figures 1 and 2). The project area is located on the northeastern edge of the Fort Worth metroplex in Haltom City, Tarrant County, Texas. The subject property is situated on the east side of Haltom Road and is partially surrounded by developed public school land on the north, with Haltom High School across Haltom Road to the northwest. Fenced partially cleared pastureland borders the southern edge of the subject property, Big Fossil Creek borders the eastern side, and Haltom Road borders the western side. This report presents the results of the background, archeological, and archival investigations conducted in May-June 2016, by C Dimensions' Principal Investigator Judy H. Cooper.

Environmental Setting

The project area is located in a partially wooded fenced former cow pasture. The terrain is partially level with large areas of modified surface for drainage development. A ponded area is situated in the north central portion of the property, and standing water was also observed along both the eastern and northwestern portions of the property (Figures 3 and 4). Large portions of the subject property have been modified to allow drainage across the property to Big Fossil Creek to the east (Figures 5 and 6). Recent heavy rains have raised water levels; however, the inundated areas are frequently flooded by runoff. Vegetation consists of pasture grass, honey locust, cottonwood, oaks, cattail, and weeds. Because the growth is intermittently sparse and tracks and roads cross many parts of the acreage, ground visibility throughout the project area varies but is often fair to excellent, with an overall estimate of 30 percent ground visibility in areas not ponded, channelized, or covered in drainage water.

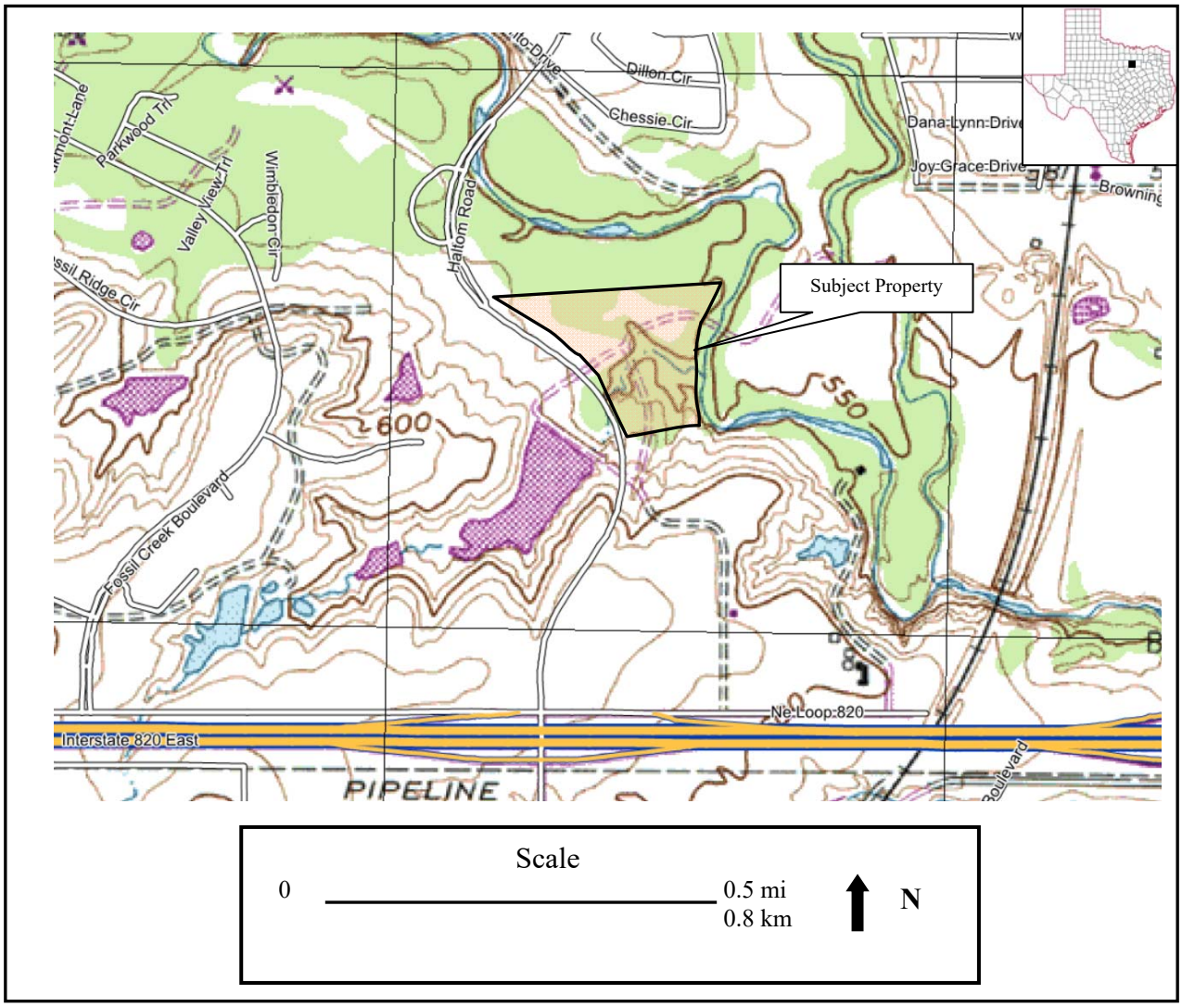

Figure 1. Project area location, Haltom City, TX (USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle map, Haltom City, TX Photorevised1981).

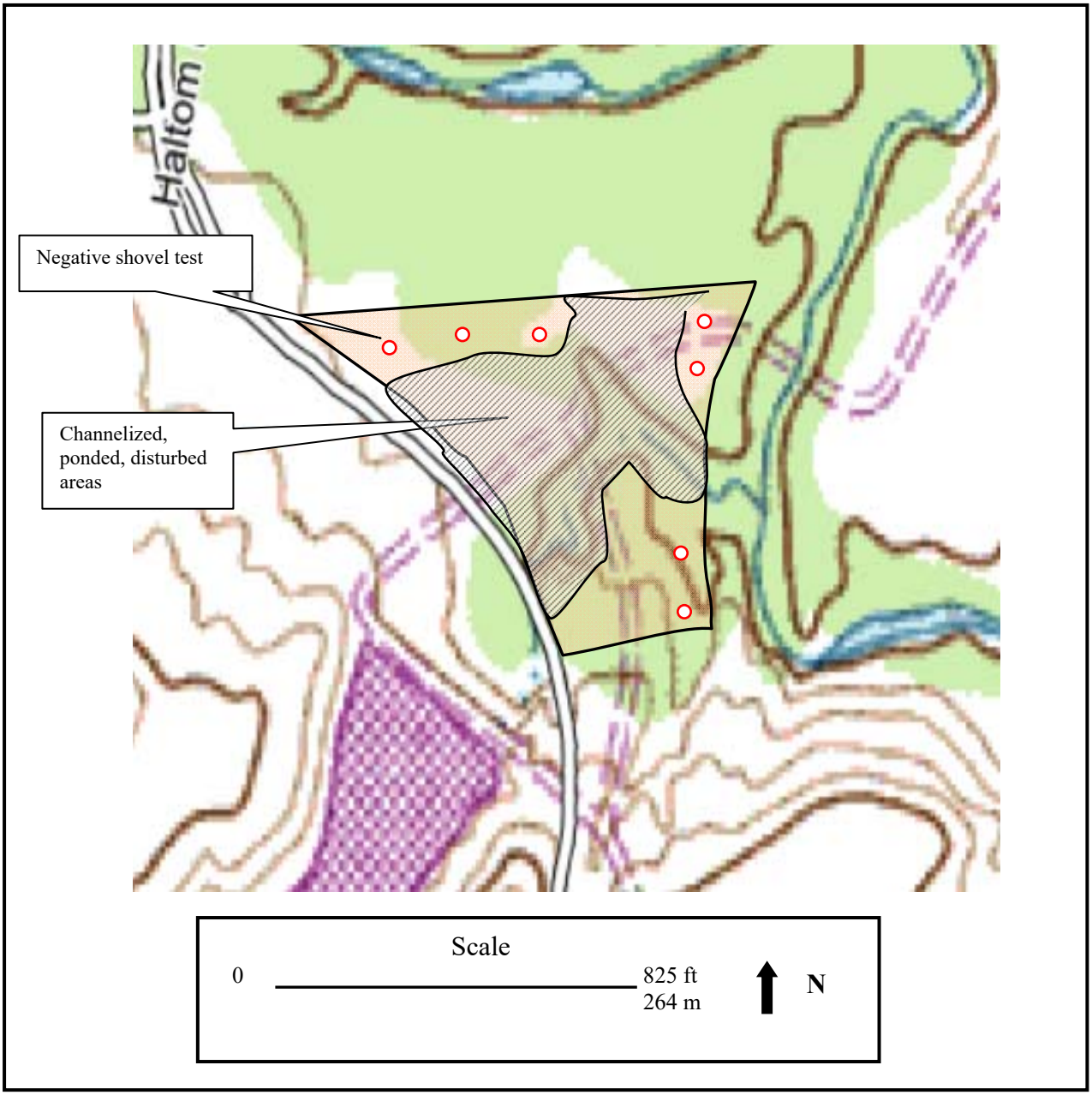

Figure 2. Subject Property showing shovel tests and disturbances.

Figure 3. View of the large ponded area in the north-central portion of the property.

Figure 4. View of the inundated area in the eastern portion of the property.

Figure 5. View of the west-central portion of the project area showing the heavily disturbed and channelized landform (Haltom Road in background).

Figure 6. View of the northeastern portion of the property showing graded disturbance and adjacent baseball field.

The local geology consists of the Cretaceous aged Austin, Eagle Ford, Woodbine, and U. Washita Group which was formed roughly 66-144 million years ago. The property is located in the Grand Prairie physiographic region at an elevation ranging between 550-562 feet (176-180 m). The eastern Grand Prairie region developed on limestones where weathering and erosion have left thin, rocky soils (Bureau of Economic Geology 1996; Griffith et al 2004).

The majority of soils in the project area consist of Ovan clay, occasionally flooded, with small amounts of Frio silty clay, frequently flooded, Sanger clay 3 to 5 percent slopes, and Medlin clay, 5 to 15 percent slopes. Ovan clay occurs on floodplain steps and is derived from a parent material of Clayey alluvium of quaternary age derived from mixed sources. Frio silty clay, which occurs on a small portion of the northeastern corner of the property, occurs on floodplains and is loamy alluvium derived from limestone and shale. Sanger clay occurs on ridges and is derived from clayey slope alluvium over residuum weathered from claystone. Medlin clay occurs on ridges and is derived from clayey residuum weathered from marl. Mean annual temperature is approximately 64-68º F and mean annual precipitation is about 30-34 inches (Web Soil Survey 2016).

METHODS AND RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

Background Research

Prior to initiation of field investigations, background information for the area was examined to determine whether archeological sites or projects had been conducted in the vicinity. Site files were examined via the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas. No previously recorded cultural resources sites are located on or within one mile of the subject property. No previous archeological projects have been conducted on or adjacent to the project area; however, several previous archeological surveys have been conducted within one mile including projects for highway and parks development.

Field Investigations

The field effort consisted of the systematic inspection of the project area by transects running roughly northeast-southwest. These transects were highly irregular because many areas of the property are ponded and channelized, and these areas had to be navigated. Shovel tests were placed in undisturbed locations outside the deeply and widely disturbed areas that had been channelized and where intact sediments were suspected. Ground exposures along tracks and graded areas were common across the entire property and these areas were systematically examined. The majority of the project area exhibited eroded surficial sediments containing numerous limestone and natural chert gravels mixed with dark or yellow calcareous flood zone clay sediments (Figures 7 and 8).

Nearby structures are all modern and include school buildings and the structures associated with the school baseball field (see Figure 4). Seven shovel tests, all sterile, were excavated in potentially undisturbed areas of lower ground visibility. Each shovel test was approximately 30 cm in diameter and ranged from 10 to 20 cm deep, terminating when ancient heavily graveled and/or dense flood zone clay sediments were encountered. Surficial soils ranged from dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay in the northeastern corner of the property, to yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) gravelly clay and very dark brown (10YR2/2) very fine, very dense sorted flood zone calcareous clay. Soils were screened through ¼ inch mesh, or in the case of the very dense clay trowelled through carefully, and a record of each shovel test was recorded including depth, soil characteristics, and other notable features.

The project area and shovel tests were recorded with a hand-held WAAS enabled GPS unit. Color images were captured on a 6 megapixel digital Kodak EasyShare Z612 camera to document the general characteristics of the landform, vegetation, and shovel tests.

Figure 7. View of ancient yellow clay sediments typical in shovel tests.

Figure 8. View of typical ground exposure examined.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Results and Discussion

All areas were examined during the intensive pedestrian survey. Erosion of the property has disturbed the surface context but also permitted good ground surface visibility across some portions of the project area. Surface gravels exhibited moderate to large amounts of broken limestone regolith.

No evidence of significant, intact, or other cultural resources was encountered in any portion of the project area. Furthermore, there is no evidence that historic homesteads or associated intact structures and features were located within the project area, and standing structures adjacent to the subject property are all modern school and baseball field structures associated with Haltom High School. No materials that require curation were encountered or collected, and the probability for the presence of deeply, or otherwise, buried sites is low.

Recommendation

No additional cultural resources investigations are recommended in the project area and the proposed construction of the High Pointe complex will have no effect on significant historic or archeological properties. No additional cultural resources investigations are recommended.

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